

# NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL DAY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 388, S. Res. 118.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 118) designating December 12, 1999, as "National Children's Memorial Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 118) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

## S. RES. 118

Whereas approximately 80,000 infants, children, teenagers, and young adults of families living throughout the United States die each year from myriad causes;

Whereas the death of an infant, child, teenager, or young adult of a family is considered to be 1 of the greatest tragedies that a parent or family will ever endure during a lifetime; and

Whereas a supportive environment and empathy and understanding are considered critical factors in the healing process of a family that is coping with and recovering from the loss of a loved one: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved,*

## SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL DAY.

The Senate—

(1) designates December 12, 1999, as "National Children's Memorial Day"; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities in remembrance of the many infants, children, teenagers, and young adults of families in the United States who have died.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I also note that the Senator from Nevada is the chief sponsor of this resolution designating December 12 as "National Children's Memorial Day." I wanted to recognize his efforts.

## DESIGNATING A DAY TO "GIVE THANKS, GIVE LIFE"

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from consideration of S. Res. 225 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 225) to designate November 23, 2000, Thanksgiving Day, as a day to "Give Thanks, Give Life" and to discuss

organ and tissue donation with other family members.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am delighted to join with my distinguished colleagues, Senators FRIST, DEWINE, KENNEDY, LEVIN and others in supporting the passage of Senate Resolution 225, which designates November 23, 2000, Thanksgiving Day, as a day for families to discuss organ and tissue donation with other family members and to Give Thanks, Give Life. The purpose of this legislation is to encourage discussions concerning family members' intentions to donate their organs so that informed decisions can be made if the occasion to donate arises.

As we prepare to recess for the Thanksgiving holiday, we are all aware that this is one of the few times throughout the year for families to take time out of their busy lives to come together and give thanks for the many blessings in their lives. This occasion presents an ideal opportunity for family members to have frank discussions about their intentions on the issue of organ and tissue donation. This is a discussion about life and sharing the gift of life and fits perfectly with the theme of Thanksgiving Day. Although family members may have already designated themselves as organ donors on their driver's license or voter registration, that step does not ensure donation will take place since the final decision on whether a potential donor will share the gift of life is usually made by surviving family members regardless of their loved one's initial intent.

There are approximately 21,000 men, women, and children in the United States who receive the gift of life each year through transplantation surgery made possible by the generosity of organ and tissue donors. This is only a small proportion of the more than 66,000 Americans who are on the waiting list, hoping for their chance to prolong their lives by finding a matching donor. Tragically, nearly 5,000 of these patients each year, or 13 patients each day, die while waiting for a donated heart, liver, kidney, or other organ.

In order to narrow the gap between the supply and the increasing demand for donated organs, we must step up our effort to encourage willing donors to make their desire to donate clear to the only people usually able to make the decision if the occasion should arise—their immediate family members. Although there are up to 15,000 potential donors annually, families' consent to donation is received for less than 6,000 donors. As the demand for transplantation increases due to prolonged life expectancy and increased prevalence of diseases that lead to organ damage and failure, including hypertension, alcoholism, and hepatitis C infection, this shortfall will become even more pronounced. Additionally, the need for a more diverse donor pool, including a variety of racial and ethnic

minorities, will also continue to grow with the predicted population trends.

Many Americans will spend part of the Thanksgiving Day with some of those family members who would be most likely approached to make the important decision of whether or not to donate. Therefore, this would be a good time for families to spend a portion of that day discussing how they might give life to others on a day devoted to giving thanks for their own blessings. Open family discussions on this topic on a day of relaxation and family togetherness will increase awareness of the intentions of those willing to make the courageous and selfless decision to be organ donors, leading to more lifesaving transplants in the future. Designation of November 23, 2000, Thanksgiving Day, as a day for families to Give Thanks, Give Life is an important next step to promoting the dialogue between willing donors and their families, so that family members will know their loved ones' wishes long before the issue arises.

We have received a great outpouring of support for this resolution from many of the national organ and tissue donation organizations, including the American Heart Association, American Kidney Fund, American Liver Foundation, American Lung Association, American Society of Transplant Surgeons, American Thoracic Society, Association of Organ Procurement Organizations, Coalition on Donation, Eye Bank Association of America, James Redford Institute for Transplant Awareness, National Kidney Foundation, National Minority Organ and Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP), Transplant Recipients International Organization (TRIO), United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), and the Wendy Marks Foundation for Organ Donor Awareness. The tireless efforts of these groups and others have been critical in increasing donor awareness and education of the public on this extremely important cause. Their willingness to become involved with the Give Thanks, Give Life resolution and to provide their expertise in the development and implementation of a national campaign targeted at Thanksgiving 2000 will be invaluable in making this a national event with far-reaching effects.

The adoption of this resolution is a small victory for the organ donation awareness cause, but we must not forget the many casualties who have died awaiting a donated organ. One tragic loss that so many of us can relate to is the recent death of Walter Payton, an American hero. He contracted a rare liver disease that is often cured if the patient can receive a liver transplant. In Payton's case, the risk of deadly complications grew too quickly for him to be saved. He likely would have had to wait for years for his life-saving organ. The prevention of deaths like that of this great man and of so many other silent heroes is why our efforts in this life-saving cause must continue. A